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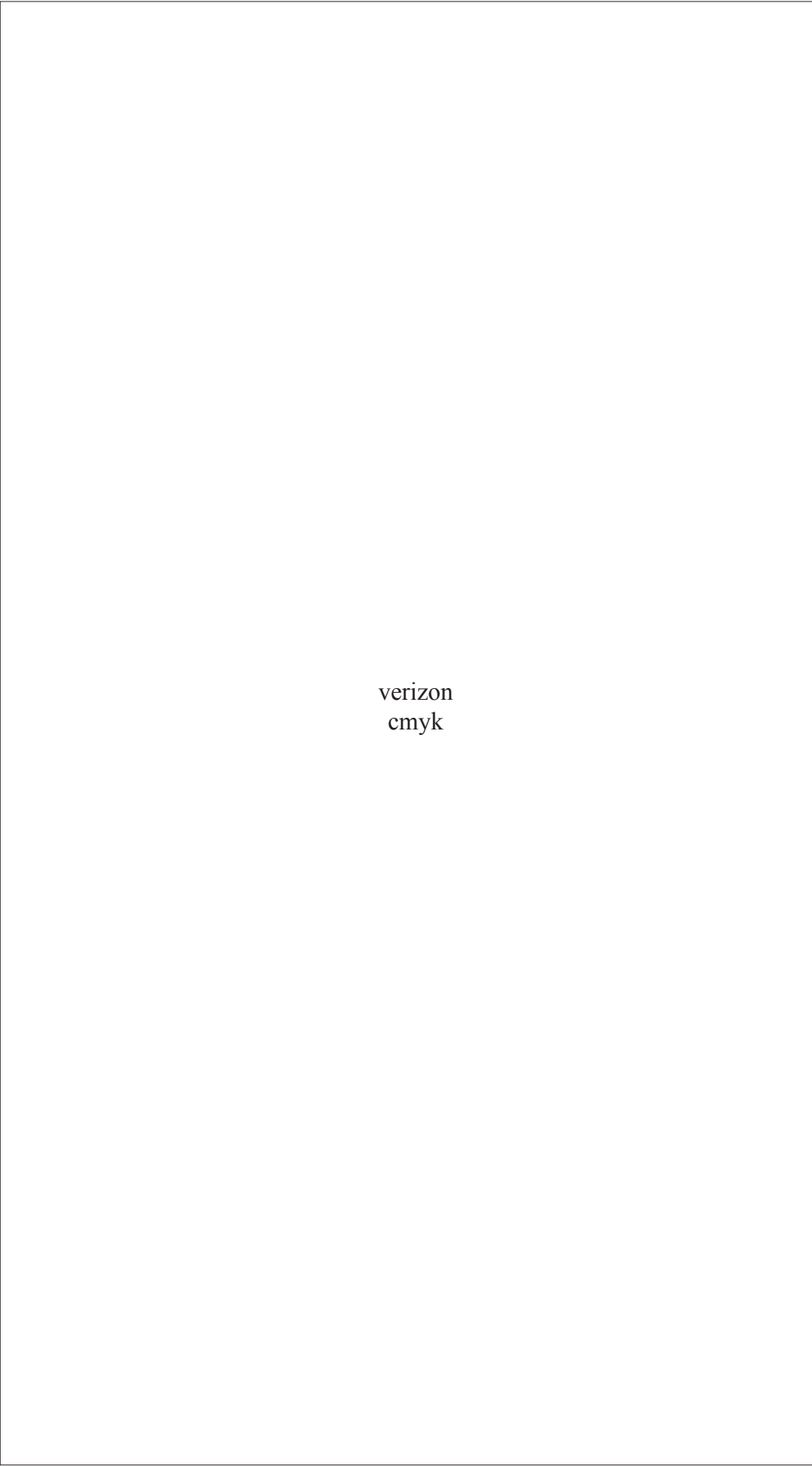
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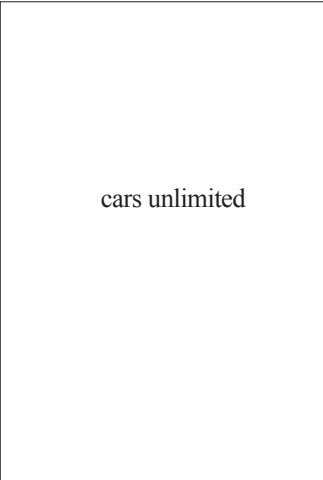
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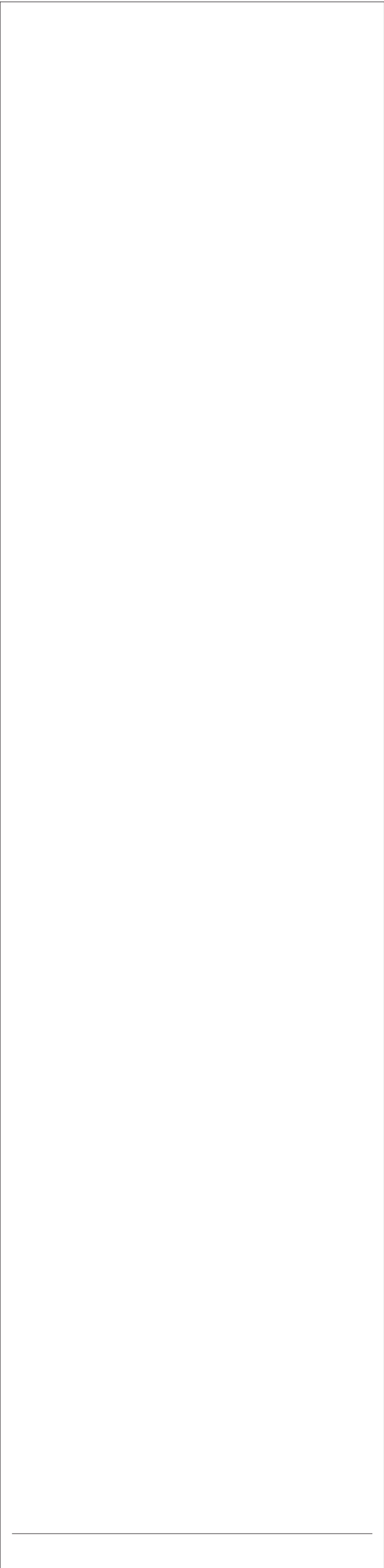


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CITY	FORECAST	HIGH	LOW
 Auckland	Partly Cloudy	60F (16C)	46F (8C)
 Beijing	Sunny	91F (33C)	64F (18C)
 Hong Kong	Thunder	90F (32C)	79F (26C)
 Honolulu	Partly Cloudy	87F (31C)	72F (22C)
 London, England	Showers	66F (19C)	51F (11C)
 Los Angeles	Partly Cloudy	80F (27C)	62F (17C)
 Manila	Thunder	93F (34C)	82F (28C)
 Melbourne	Partly Cloudy	58F (14C)	42F (6C)
 Miami	Sunny	91F (33C)	76F (24C)
 New York City	Rain	70F (21C)	60F (16C)
 Osaka	Sunny	70F (21C)	55F (13C)
 Paris	Showers	65F (18C)	49F (9C)
 Pusan	Sunny	74F (23C)	61F (16C)
 Rome	Cloudy	68F (20C)	51F (11C)
 Salem, Oregon	Sunny	74F (23C)	50F (10C)
 San Francisco	Sunny	67F (19C)	53F (12C)
 Seoul	Sunny	81F (27C)	60F (16C)
 Tokyo, Japan	Rain	68F (20C)	60F (16C)
 Washington, DC	Thunder	84F (29C)	64F (18C)

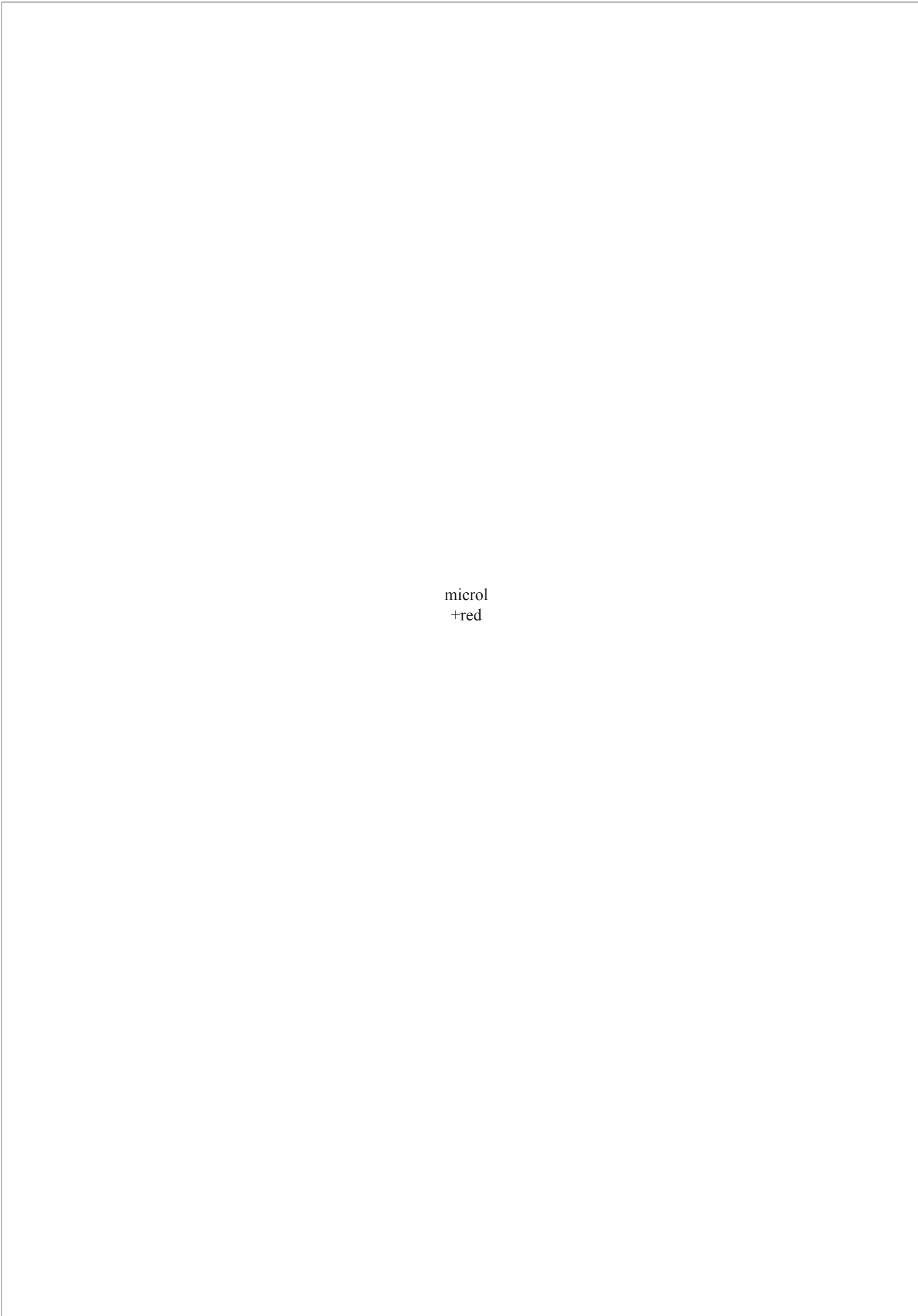


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Opinion

Saipan Tribune

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EDITORIAL

Millions lost in cyberspace

Tucked into the Telecommunications Act of 1996 was a little-known program called the “e-rate,” setting up a tax that has cost consumers and phone companies upward of \$2 billion a year. What has that money bought? A rudderless program riddled with fraud and waste.

The e-rate tax is aimed at providing schools and libraries with Internet access. The program, championed by Al Gore when he was vice president, was supposed to help schools allow low-income students to close the “digital divide” and gain new social and economic opportunities. Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) began raising questions about it during a hearing on the program six years ago. Since then, its problems have become more apparent. The e-rate fund has distributed \$12 billion over six years, and estimates place the amount wasted in the billions. Because of lack of oversight, it’s impossible to know the extent of the losses.

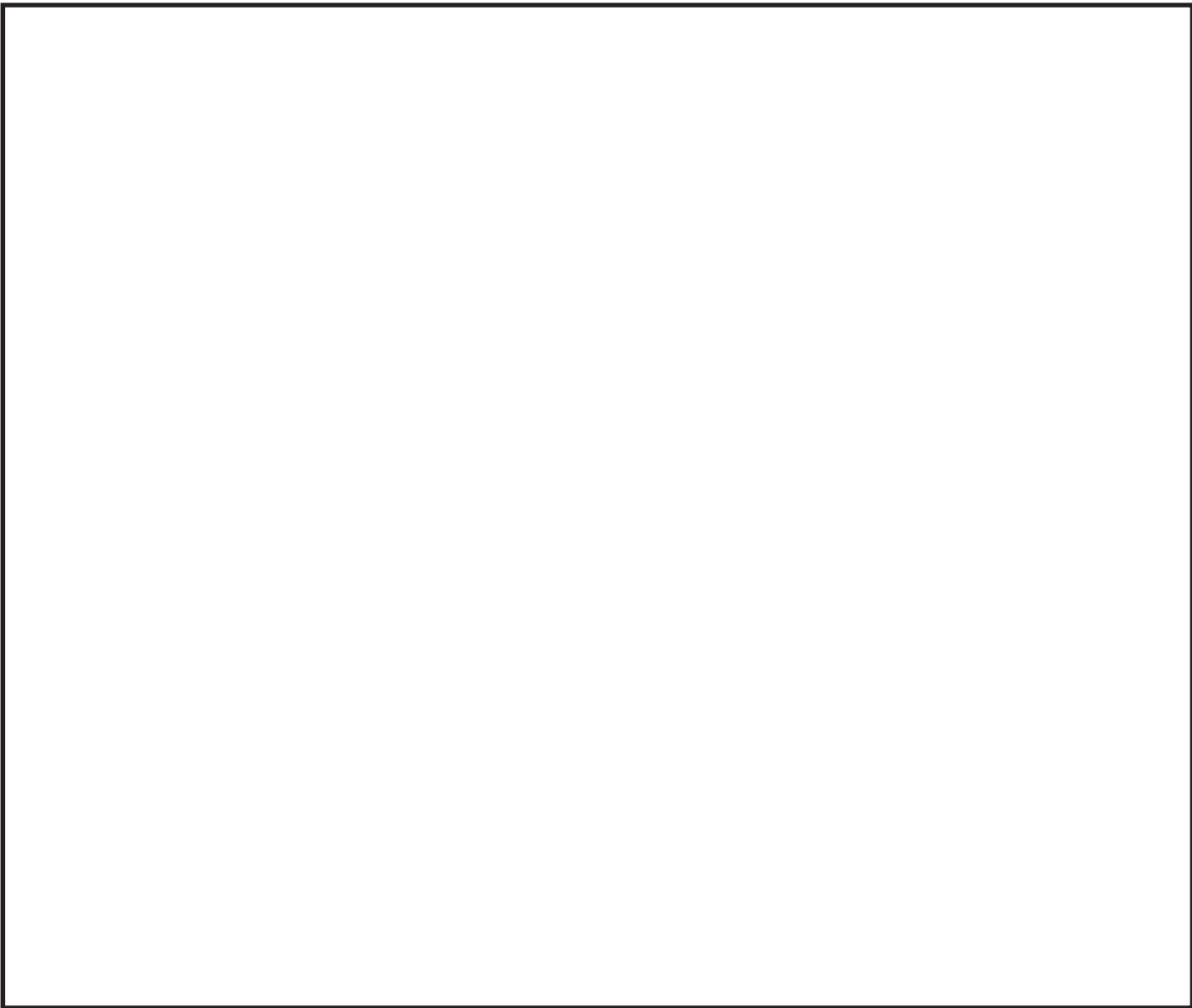
During a recent House hearing, legislators documented some of the lapses. They showed, for instance, how most of the \$101 million in e-rate funds spent in Puerto Rico went to dubious purchases, such as 73,000 wireless connection cards for individual computers. The cards, purchased at more than \$300 apiece five years ago, have grown obsolete in a warehouse outside San Juan. Most Puerto Rican children still access the Internet through dial-up modems on roughly two computers per school.

Other rural projects cited by supporters as successes have enormous per-pupil costs. A conflict of interest is built into the program’s core: Its dollars are doled out by a nonprofit corporation run by telecommunications service providers whose businesses benefit from the money. They are barely overseen by the Federal Communications Commission.

Legislators are planning more hearings after the Fourth of July recess, and the e-rate program will come up for congressional reauthorization next year. Its overall success or failure has never even been measured. Unless the schools and libraries that want it renewed can help make the program accountable, there’s not much point in continuing it.

The FCC should take over from the board and put e-rate on probation. Grant applicants should have to submit plans that use proven technologies in cost-effective ways. Surfing the Internet isn’t enough.

Los Angeles Times



How to rescue sick foreign states

By SEBASTIAN MALLABY
The Washington Post

Half a decade ago, in the wake of the emerging-market crisis that spread from East Asia to Russia to Brazil, the policy circuit buzzed with proposals to reform international finance. Bright ideas were mooted—by think tanks, market sages and a high-profile congressional commission—and in 2001 the incoming Bush team declared itself “impatient” with the status quo it had inherited. But the upshot of this brainstorming was modest, incremental change. The grand reformist talk only weakened confidence in the existing system while doing little to improve it.

Today we have a new version of this phenomenon. The big buzz right now surrounds post-conflict reconstruction: Both Afghanistan and Iraq have shown that we aren’t good at it. At least three bits of legislation on this topic are floating around Congress; the State Department is mulling schemes to strengthen its response; the Pentagon promises to train African peacekeepers. The Center for Global Development recently produced a report on conflict and failed states, and the Council on Foreign Relations has a high-level task force examining the same challenge.

Some of the new thinking is quite radical. The report from the Center for Global Development, for example, advocates a cabinet-level department in the U.S. government to handle strategy toward developing countries. It calls for an initiative to anticipate civil wars so that preventive action can displace expensive remedial efforts; the British government is implementing a version of this policy. Others advocate a new reconstruction trust fund, which would get around the need to pass the hat when a crisis demands urgent intervention.

Much of this sounds good, and I’ve done my bit in the past to press versions of this agenda. But it’s hard to escape the feeling that we’re reliving the debate over emerging markets, when ambitious ideas—an international bankruptcy court, an early-warning system for crises, an expanded International Monetary Fund that could act as a global lender of last resort—briefly lit the sky and then rapidly fizzled.

Some of the current post-conflict proposals should be ruled out on grounds of political implausibility. After the bureaucratic teething problems of the Department of Homeland Security, is it realistic to propose another cabinet-level agency? Given the trouble of raising money for existing international programs—the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, for example, seems likely

to get a fraction of the money it is asking for in this year’s appeal—what is the likelihood that a post-conflict trust fund would attract serious cash from donors? Would the French or German government donate money to such a fund, knowing that the money might be spent on a future crisis that it deemed unworthy, such as cleaning up after the Bush administration in Iraq? Unlikely.

Other proposals are politically easy but practically unhelpful. Early-warning, for example, sounds good, and it’s not hard to create a new unit in the State Department to monitor leading indicators of conflict. But civil conflicts, like financial crises, are hard to predict with any certainty, and in any case the private sector is already trying. In the financial world, you can consult a credit-rating agency or an investment bank. In the political world, you can read the excellent reports from the International Crisis Group.

Moreover, suppose you identify a list of 20 tense countries where civil war looks likely. What do you do about it? The central finding in development theory in the past decade is that you probably could not do anything. Foreign aid does not work in dysfunctional countries, where the threat of conflict looms; it works only in countries that are well run, which is why the Bush administration’s Millennium Challenge Account will funnel cash to a short list of nations that are poor yet governed competently. If the talk of “conflict prevention” gets too much traction, this virtuous selectivity may be undone. Aid will be diverted to corrupt, autocratic environments that seem headed for civil war. It will probably be wasted.

Rather than reaching for a radical new fix, the best approach to the problem of failed states is to nurture the institutions that we have already. You want a post-conflict trust fund? Well, you already have the World Bank, whose subsidized loans can be used to reconstruct countries—why not just expand it? You want an institution that can parachute into a broken country and rebuild everything from the judicial system to the electricity grid to the central bank? Well, the World Bank can do that too, and did in Bosnia—again, why not give it more resources? You want an institution that can mobilize peacekeepers and train new indigenous armies? You already have the United Nations and NATO, so why not bolster them before you dream up a third option?

Above all, don’t lose sight of past experience. Exactly 60 years ago, at the Bretton Woods conference in July 1944, the United States and its allies created the World Bank, believing (as Franklin Roosevelt told the delegates) that poverty and hopelessness threatened the world’s stability. Six decades later, we’ve learned some lessons about what works and what doesn’t in failed and failing states. Ignoring that history will condemn us to relive it.

Blind rush toward AIDS therapy may prove disastrous

By **SALLY SATEL**

Special to the Los Angeles Times

The World Health Organization is racing to get medication to millions of people infected with HIV/AIDS. The organization's "3 by 5 plan"—which aims to treat 3 million people, mostly Africans, by the end of 2005—is an ambitious one. But maybe WHO should slow down before it causes harm to those it seeks to aid.

A red flag went up last month when WHO announced that two medications on its list of approved HIV drugs did not meet quality standards. The drugs were antiretrovirals made by Cipla, an Indian manufacturer whose major business is copying pharmaceuticals invented and patented by other companies, mainly in the United States.

The problem? The raw data from tests conducted by an independent company (hired by Cipla) to evaluate two of Cipla's HIV drugs—drugs that WHO endorsed—failed to prove that those drugs would deliver as much medication to a person's system as the gold-standard patented form of the pills.

In the case of HIV/AIDS medications, low concentrations in blood and tissues make it harder to keep the virus from multiplying and creating mutant forms, some of which will no longer respond to medication. When these mutated forms multiply within an individual or are transmitted to another person, resistant strains spread and the disease becomes harder to contain.

Since the two Cipla-made drugs were approved by WHO in 2002 and 2003, thousands of Africans have taken them. The longer patients are exposed to inadequate doses, the greater the chance for drug-resistant HIV strains to develop.

To what extent has this already happened? Who will contact these individuals and tell them to discontinue the medications? And what medications will they take in place of these drugs?

How WHO will handle this problem is not the only question the organization faces. Some global health experts also worry that it is promoting a questionable treatment in the form of a pill called Triomune, also made by Cipla, as its first-line medication in the "3 by 5" initiative.

Triomune contains three standard HIV drug compounds (lamivudine, stavudine and nevirapine), each at a fixed dose and combined together in one pill. WHO officials say a combination pill is easier to distribute and more convenient for users. Many Western HIV/AIDS patients take up to 20 pills over the course of the day, so ease of administration is no small matter.

But there are potential problems. WHO does not test drugs, and Triomune has not been approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration because Cipla has not submitted it. This is especially puzzling in light of the FDA's recently announced intention to expedite approval of fixed-dose antiretrovirals made by foreign drug companies.

Many health experts are rightly skeptical of a one-size-fits-all approach to a complex disease that doctors in the West routinely treat with a flexible armament of drugs, adjusted to each patient according to that individual's needs.

Specific drugs are switched often or their dosage strengths adjusted depending on side effects, progress of the disease and other medical problems the patient suffers.

A doctor's freedom to custom-tailor a cocktail is essential so that the resulting medicine does not interact badly with other drugs or exacerbate a particular medical condition also suffered.

In rural Africa, where sophisticated medical care is lacking, a calculable percentage of patients will become very sick or even die from the nevirapine component of this three-in-one drug. Thus the dilemma: the need to balance drug-related deaths and illness from using Triomune against the numbers of people who would go untreated altogether if aid agencies adopted a flexible but more expensive strategy.

As attention turns to the International AIDS Conference in Bangkok, Thailand, next month, WHO must regain the world's confidence and not foist unproven drug therapies on the world's poor and sick.

Satel, a physician, is a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute.

NATO's 'myth' in Afghanistan

By **JACKSON DIEHL**

The Washington Post

A couple of years ago, when the Bush administration's unilateralists were still riding high, a senior official at the Pentagon told me the mocking slogan for the trans-Atlantic alliance then circulating around his building went as follows: "NATO—keep the myth alive!" No doubt he never imagined that in the run-up to the 2004 election, his boss would be trying to do just that—only without the sarcasm.

"I don't know when in the history of the alliance we've seen so many successes," a newly enthusiastic Donald Rumsfeld told the press traveling with him last week to the NATO summit in Istanbul. He and other administration officials extolled NATO's decision to help train Iraqi security forces and its commitment of more troops to Afghanistan. They echoed President Bush's claim that the feuding about Iraq that nearly destroyed the alliance last year was over. "We got everything we wanted," one White House official said.

Such rhetoric is a logical response to John Kerry's tactic of making Bush's mismanagement of NATO, and its consequences in Iraq, a central part of his argument to voters. It is even partly true—at least in the sense that the Bush administration is now eager to work with the allies in Iraq and Afghanistan, in contrast to the stiff-arm Rumsfeld delivered to the Europeans hoping to join the first offensive against the Taliban in the fall of 2001.

The sad part is that, behind all the spin, the old Pentagon gibe is looking more and more apt. Having expanded to include most of Central Europe, and resolved to address the threats of the 21st century, America's most important international partnership is on the brink of a crippling failure, one that would leave a President Kerry as well as a second-term Bush with little to work with.

The threat lies not in Iraq—where continued trans-Atlantic discord in fact makes a full-blown NATO operation impossible—but in Afghanistan, which NATO long ago adopted as a major ongoing mission. Last year the allies resolved to expand a modest peacekeeping force in Kabul to provincial centers around the country, an operation critical to bolstering the authority of the weak pro-Western government and making possible the national elections planned for this year.

Yet, after months and months of haggling, European governments were only barely able to commit at Istanbul to staffing three new provincial centers, each with a couple of hundred troops. The cup-rattling forced on Secretary General Jaap de

Hoop Scheffer was humiliating: With 26 nations and 5 million men in arms to draw on, Scheffer struggled to obtain just three helicopters for the Afghan operation.

A desperate appeal for more help by Afghan President Hamid Karzai to the Istanbul summit essentially went unanswered. A promise was made to supply a couple of thousand more troops at the time of the elections, but no one knows where they will come from. At best, NATO will have 8,400 troops under its command in Afghanistan by the fall, or about a fifth of the number it dispatched to tiny Kosovo in 1999. The United States has some 14,000 troops in the country, but none are under NATO's command.

It now looks possible that the Afghan elections will be postponed because of lack of security. If so, NATO will get much of the blame—and the consequences for the alliance's cohesion may be dire. "Afghanistan is the litmus test for NATO's new mission," says a European ambassador in Washington. "If we fail in Afghanistan we might as well fold up and go home, because no one will take us seriously after that."

The mess points to the realities behind the happy talk from Istanbul. Though it now extols NATO rhetorically, the Pentagon's practical approach to it hasn't changed: No American troops have been pledged to the NATO Afghan mission, and proposals to bring the U.S. forces already there under NATO's umbrella have gone nowhere. European governments doubt that Bush's conversion to multilateralism is real—and consequently have little appetite for an operation that appears thankless as well as dangerous and expensive.

"The allies need more reassurance," the European ambassador told me. "We want to be assured that what we're now seeing is not multilateralism growing out of desperation—because desperate multilateralism is not effective multilateralism."

Yet, even if the Europeans were more enthusiastic, they might have little to contribute. Germany, the largest country in the European Union, has 270,000 soldiers in its army—yet its commanders maintain that no more than about 10,000 can be deployed at any one time. No matter the politics, the German Parliament is unlikely to authorize an increase in the current ceiling of 2,300 troops for Afghanistan. And Germany is the largest contributor to the NATO operation—France, which has never liked the idea of NATO operations outside of Europe, has only 800 soldiers there.

For now, Bush's interest lies in glossing over this trouble. Kerry's pitch is that he can make it go away with a new, alliance-centered foreign policy. Both are, in effect, counting on the myth's staying alive—at least until November.

Letters to the Editor

Saipan Tribune welcomes contributions. All letters intended for publication must include the writer's name, address and, if possible, fax or telephone number. Letters are edited for space, clarity and fairness.

Let's get on with our lives

I greatly appreciated Tina Sablan's letters to the editor (June 29th and April 7th) on gay rights. It was most unfortunate that in her words she "did not get a chance to speak, although I tried" at the hearing on Initiative 14-3, which aims to limit marriage to people of opposite sexes.

Sean Frink testified at the hearing that many young people are against House Speaker Fitial's Initiative 14-3 and, according to her June 29th letter, Ms. Sablan is one of them. It is unfortunate she didn't get a chance to speak.

Like Ms. Sablan, I was confused by Rep. Oscar Babauta's question at the hearing on what the law would do should Tom and Harry adopt an infant who would die without breast milk. Then he asked what if Mary and Jane adopted and had the same situation. I don't know why Mr. Babauta asked such questions, but whether a same sex-couple or heterosexual couple adopts, both would be in the same situation and require milk from an outside source. Examples of similarities between same-sex and heterosexual couples could go on and on. Both wanting life with the one they love. No difference.

Like Ms. Sablan, I was also confused by a woman's claim that people choose to be gay. This was the first time I have heard

such. My many gay friends have all said they knew early on they felt attracted to one of their same sex. This, in spite of all their parents', peers' and society's expectations that they date and marry one of opposite sex. Initiative 14-3 is just one example! Why would anyone "choose" to be gay—often subject to ridicule and even persecution? Death under some governments.

I have heard so many stories of widespread infidelity in marriage, incest, children born outside wedlock and teen pregnancies in Saipan. These have been heterosexual, not homosexual related. My gay friends have been faithful to their partners, perhaps because they had to work so hard to be with the one they love. Again, just look at Initiative 14-3!

Let's attack problems like flagrant unfaithfulness in marriage, domestic violence, incest, children born outside wedlock, teen pregnancy, insufficient school textbooks, unemployment, lack of public transportation, and let people marry the one of their choice. Let them get on with their lives. And, everyone else should get on with theirs.

Millie Carroll

Capitol Hill

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Life & Style

Why men don't phone: It's not him, it's you

By ROXANNE ROBERTS
THE WASHINGTON POST

It was a great date. He promised to call. He never called.

The average single woman will stare at the phone, willing it to ring. A long list of possibilities noisily circle through her brain, like a hamster on an exercise wheel: He lost my number. He's really busy. He's intimidated. I talked too much. I drank too much. I slept with him. I didn't sleep with him....@

No, no, no. None of the above. The answer, according to author Greg Behrendt, is that he's not really interested.

Doesn't matter why. No ego-soothing platitudes. No pop psychology. No cute relationship tricks. He's just not that into you. The truth will set you free, but first it will make you miserable.

The tough talk is tough love for women from Behrendt, who strips away all the excuses for men (why he didn't call, isn't faithful, disappears, won't commit, etc., etc.) in the new book, "He's Just Not That Into You: The No-Excuses Truth to Understanding Guys," so women will stop wasting their time on the wrong guy.

The Los Angeles comedian was a bachelor for two decades before settling down. By his own admission, he was guilty of plenty of bad dating behavior—which made him a perfect consultant to the hit HBO series "Sex and the City." For the last three seasons, Behrendt advised the show's all-female writing staff, sitting in on scriptwriting sessions and providing the "straight male" feedback.

"The biggest lie of all is 'It's not you'—because you are the person I'm in the relationship with. The truth is, 'It is you, and I'm not into you,'" says Behrendt, 41, now a happily married father of a 2-year-old daughter.

About 18 months ago, Behrendt listened to the female writers ("All sharp, all attractive, couldn't have more going for themselves," he says) discuss a guy who had gone out with one of them, kissed her, then declined to come up to her apartment because he had an early meeting. No call the next day, but he sent an e-mail a week later.

The women all reassured her that she was fabulous and that he must be scared or really busy. Behrendt knew no morning meeting will keep an attracted man from a midnight mambo. "My first thought was, 'I don't care if I'm flying the space shuttle tomorrow, I'm coming up.'"

He broke the news: The guy wasn't into her.

The writers gasped. "We were horrified," remembers Liz Tuccillo. "It was like we were all punched in the stomach. Then we started laughing." The cruel reality descended on the room. Each woman grilled Behrendt about her own relationship, and each time he shot down all the sympathetic excuses. The bottom line: If these men were truly interested, they would call, be faithful, commit, and more. It was just common sense to him, but a revelation—like cracking an ancient, secret code—to the women.

There's plenty of dating advice, mostly for women trying to deconstruct the hearts of men. The premise is that men are complicated, emotionally stunted creatures incapable of direct action. And so women spend years obsessing with understanding girlfriends, wildly hoping that deep down he's really in love and wants to be with them. Even if he doesn't pick up the phone.

People always want to know, "What happened?" Nothing happened, says Nancy Kirsch, senior vice president of It's Just Lunch international dating service. "Ultimately, chemistry is impossible to predict. That's what it boils down to.

"I hate to think that someone thinks they did something wrong or something not right enough on a date. That's just not the case." But women, she says, are much more prone to second-guessing than men. "We want to try to figure it out. We want to fix it." And they so want to believe men are telling the truth.

Behrendt believes men would rather chew off their arms than admit the truth. Why do they lie? Not just lie, but kiss and compliment and generally mess with women's heads rather than say, "I'm just not that into you"? He thinks it's fear of confrontation. "I can't even tell you why. Men are afraid of women being upset or yelling. In a fight with a guy, you know what it is: It gets verbal, then it gets physical. With a women, you don't know where it's going to go, and you know it can't and shouldn't get physical."

Relationship correspondent Jon Platner, in a column on AskMen.com called How to Reject the Girl You Don't Want, concludes that honesty can make women defensive and confrontational. "She may also ask you countless questions about what she did wrong, a situation you definitely don't want to be stuck in," he writes.

He prefers Option 2: Give her gradual hints such as stop returning her calls, saying you just got out of a relationship and are hesitant to leap into another one, or are too busy with your career. Says Platner: "This is ideal because it ends the relationship without you having to outright reject her. But even if she's

slow to get the hint and it still comes down to you spelling it out, at least you will have softened the blow."

So it's better to lie? Or not call? Or just disappear? Well, yeah.

Behrendt admits he was one of those guys. He doesn't remember cheating on girlfriends, but "other than that, you can mark me down as all of them." That is, until he met his wife, Amiira, six years ago. He was really, really into her from the very start.

"It was like being brought up from the minors to the majors," he says. "She was just 'it.' I was able to envision a future with her almost immediately."

She operated at a certain level, and he had to step up to that level. "I really had to be a better man, all the way around, to be with her," he says. "Other women in other relationships would suggest changes that I wasn't willing to make."

When a guy is truly interested in a woman, he pursues her. That's the way it's always been, he says, and equality hasn't changed it. And so Behrendt strips away the excuses:

If a man is into you, he'll ask you out. (In fact, Behrendt believes no woman should ask out a man who hasn't asked her out first.) He will call, no matter how busy, because you'll be a bright spot in his day. He will want to have sex with you, and will stop having sex with other women. He will want to be with you when he's sober, not just to party. If he's really, really into you he'll want to marry you. He's not into you if he's breaking up with you, or disappearing with no explanation, or married to someone else, or abusive.

There are exceptions to every rule, he says, but he really wants you to ignore them. You might be wonderful, but many wonderful women are in relationships with men who don't call, don't bother, don't care. It's wiser, he says, to assume the worst: You're the rule. He's not that into you, so get out and find someone who is.

"I'm hoping this starts a revolution that gets everyone to step up and behave better," he says. "I want women to honor themselves, and I want men to honor women."

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Life & Style



‘Hero’ slays Labor Day box office

Jet Li's Chinese martial-arts epic "Hero" relegated four new movies to the nether regions of the box office in what ended up as one of the most feeble Labor Day weekends in memory.

"Hero" ranked No. 1 by collecting an estimated \$11.5 million over the four-day holiday, which is traditionally a slow time at movie theaters as many people try to enjoy their last big summer weekend outdoors.

But this one was particularly low.

"Talk about ending the summer with a whimper," said Paul Dergarabedian, president of

box-office tracker Exhibitor Relations Co. "This is the lowest-grossing No. 1 film of the year, and one of the lowest grossing Labor Day weekends that I've ever seen."

The total \$35.2 million haul for "Hero" is still excellent for a critically acclaimed Mandarin-language epic about ancient China that sat on a shelf for nearly three years before being released in the United States.

It's the competition that proved to be lacking.

Four new movies debuted

in theaters this week: the Josh Hartnett romantic thriller

1. "Hero," \$11.5 million.
2. "Without a Paddle," \$9.4 million.
3. "Anacondas: The Hunt for the Blood Orchid," \$8 million.
4. "Paparazzi," \$7.8 million.
5. "Princess Diaries 2: Royal Engagement," \$7.3 million.
6. "Wicker Park," \$6.7 million.
7. "Collateral," \$6.5 million.
8. "Vanity Fair," \$6.12 million.
9. "The Cookout," \$6.10 million.
10. "The Bourne Supremacy," \$5.4 million.

"Wicker Park"; the Mel Gibson-produced "Paparazzi" about overzealous celebrity

photographers; Reese Witherspoon's take on the 19th century class-warfare novel "Vanity Fair"; and the hip-hop comedy "The Cookout."

All had lackluster showings.

Overall, the top 12 movies grossed \$83.4 million, about 21 percent lower than the same time last year when "Jeepers Creepers 2" led the box office.

Estimated ticket sales for Friday through Monday at North American theaters, according to Exhibitor Relations Co. Inc. Final figures will be released Tuesday. (AP)

Jerry Lewis telethon raises \$59.4 million

LOS ANGELES (AP)—The Jerry Lewis Labor Day Telethon raised \$59.4 million for the Muscular Dystrophy Association, but organizers said Monday that power outages and other disruptions from Hurricane Frances contributed to a decline over last year.

Donations totaled 1.8 percent less than last year's \$60.5 million.

Television stations in the Florida cities of Jacksonville, Sarasota and Gainesville canceled broadcasts of the telethon completely. Other Florida stations showed only the national portions, preventing the broadcast of local segments during which most pledges are made.

Lewis, 78, was assisted during the 21 1/2 hour fundraiser by Ed McMahon, and the broadcast featured performances by Elton John, Oprah Winfrey, Ray Romano, Tony Orlando and others.

The 39th annual telethon, based in Los Angeles, was shown on nearly 200 TV stations nationwide.

Moore to pursue best picture Oscar

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Michael Moore says he won't submit "Fahrenheit 9/11" for consideration as best documentary at this year's Academy Awards. Instead, he's going for the bigger prize of best picture.

Moore's critically acclaimed film slams President Bush's war on terror as ill-advised and corrupt. The movie has cheered Democrats but enraged the president's supporters, who booed Moore when he visited the Republican National Convention last week.

"For me the real Oscar would be Bush's defeat on Nov. 2," Moore told The Associated

Press during a phone interview Monday from New York.

The \$6 million film has become a sensation that collected \$117.3 million in the United States this summer, despite an early roadblock when the Walt Disney Co. banned its Miramax Films division from distributing the political hot-potato.

In the midst of the presidential campaign, Moore's announcement is a strategic move for his Oscar campaign. Documentaries and animated films have their own categories, but the conventional wisdom in Hollywood is that those niche awards can limit a film's appeal

in the overall best picture class.

Moore said he and his producing partner, Harvey Weinstein, agreed "Fahrenheit 9/11" would stand a better chance if they focused solely on the top Oscar.

He also said he wanted to be "supportive of my teammates in nonfiction film."

So many documentaries—such as the gonzo fast-food satire "Super Size Me" and the sober look at Arab television news in "Control Room"—have made the rounds in theaters recently that Moore, who won the best documentary Oscar for "Bowling for Columbine," said he wanted to give others a chance.

Johansson fends off reporter's advance

VENICE, Italy (AP)—"Lost in Translation" star Scarlett Johansson came to the Venice Film Festival to promote her latest picture, but found herself fending off romantic advances.

During a packed press conference for her film "A Love Song for Bobby Long," the 19-year-old was ambushed by an unusual question by a young journalist from Chile.

"This is kind of a confession:

I can't sleep at night thinking about you. Sorry, I have to tell you. I'm a journalist but I'm an actor, too," the Casanova said Thursday. "Please, could you choose one of your favorites (movies) to make with me. Come on Scarlett, please."

"Oh God....Uhm. 'Single White Female,' maybe," Johansson quipped, referring to the 1992 film about a woman whose roommate becomes dan-

gerously obsessed with her.

"I've never seen it," the reporter said. "What is it about? It is a love one?"

"Of sorts," Johansson replied. This same journalist has made unusual comments at other press conferences, suggesting Steven Spielberg make a sequel to "Saving Private Ryan" called "Saving Private Bush" but "at the end of the film no one saves him." And he advised Denzel Washington to run for president. Neither star responded to his remarks.



Johansson

Hare-raising tale is too good to be true

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN

DEAR ABBY: Last year, my husband's pet rabbit, "Blossom," died. My husband—I'll call him "Edwin"—went into the back yard to feed Blossom one morning and found her lying dead in her cage. He gave Blossom a little funeral and buried her in our yard.



Dear Abby

Later that day, our neighbor's dog dug up the rabbit. When the neighbor came home for lunch, he found the little body on his doorstep. Thinking his dog had killed Blossom, he panicked. He ran out, bought another rabbit that looked just like Blossom, and placed her in our cage.

When Edwin returned from work that night, he was stunned to find the rabbit sitting in its cage munching a carrot. He rushed over to Blossom's grave and, of course, found it empty. Edwin immediately concluded that a miracle had occurred—Blossom had returned from the dead.

Ever since, my husband has treated the rabbit like a little deity. He built an altar for her and puts flowers on it every day. He sits in front of her cage in the lotus position and talks to her. When I come around, he stops talking until I leave.

The neighbors have since moved, but last week I ran into the wife and she told me the story I have related to you. Thinking it might help Edwin, I repeated the story to him. He became irate and accused me of trying to ruin the only miraculous thing that had ever happened to him. (His mother had a spider that danced to Chopin etudes, so wackiness runs in the family.)

Should I insist that Edwin seek counseling, or should I continue to live with this? I really don't know where it will end.

AT MY WIT'S END

DEAR WIT'S END: You may not, but I do. It's going to end here and now. According to snopes.com, your rabbit tale is an urban legend, and so old it has whiskers. In January 1989, Johnny Carson (that king of wit!) related it as an event that had happened to a neighbor. In June 2000, a guest told it to Jay Leno. In July 2000, William Shatner repeated the story, claiming it had happened to his co-author. It turned up again in 2001 on the Chris Isaak show. Thank you for sharing it with me. It's still a thigh-slapper.

DEAR ABBY: My husband and I disagree about where to park when you visit someone. He says you park on the street, always. I say that if I am visiting someone, I should park in their driveway. He says that is rude. Who is correct?

GINNY IN MASSACHUSETTS

DEAR GINNY: Since you and your husband can't agree, call the person you are about to visit and ask where it's most convenient for you to park. That way you will avoid an argument and inconvenience no one.

DEAR ABBY: My husband and I have been married 3 1/2 years, and during that time I have begged him to stop playing "telephone games" with me when he calls me -- especially at work. He will either disguise his voice, or speak to me so low that I can't understand him. Every time I answer with the standard "Hello," he'll respond with "Hello," and this goes on for a few seconds back and forth. It drives me crazy.

How can I get through to him, loud and clear, once and for all, that this irritates me no end?

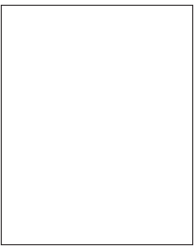
TIRED OF PLAYING GAMES IN FORT WORTH

DEAR TIRED: One effective way to send a message is through silence. If the caller does not respond properly after the first "hello," hang up the phone.

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

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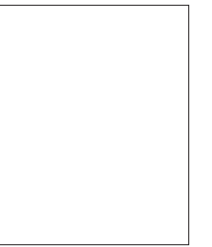




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